

The Foxes Hunt The Hounds

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The Foxes Hunt The Hounds

by [Poker](#)

Summary

The deal with the Winter King never comes to be.

But Tubbo refuses to give up on his friend. And in his journey, he stumbled beyond the Court of the Seasons, and into a world just as dangerous. The Hermits are mercurial and capricious, with no care for anyone outside of their group. But if he can complete three tasks for them, they'll bring Tommy back for him.

Tubbo has to try. No matter the cost.

Notes

In honor of Snow King's third anniversary, I decided to write a crossover fic! LBAT and Snow King collide in this fic, and I definitely enjoyed coming up with how the Hermits fit in as Fae.

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

It's the third day after Philza forces Tubbo to flee the Winter Court, leaving his friend behind, when he finds the town.

He doesn't know what he *said wrong*.

One moment, he had been pushing back hard and the next, Philza was in a rage, wings outstretched and the wolves were howling and Technoblade had an axe and-

Tubbo wasn't an idiot. He couldn't bring Tommy back if he was dead and Tommy wouldn't want him dead anyways.

They were probably expecting him to give up after that but you know what? No. Nu-uh. If he couldn't get Tommy back directly then Tubbo was *going to speak to the manager*.

Or make a deal with another Fae who could intervene in this decision.

He picked a path and started walking, hoping maybe he'd find something. This was the Veil or... Veil adjacent? Maybe? Tubbo had been running for a while. He hadn't needed to drink water for three days, so he'd put his money on some kind of magic going on.

Tubbo had still stuck to the paths, just in case. Nothing had come to bother him, and eventually the winter landscape had begun to change to a more temperate grasslands area.

And when he stepped into the town, Tubbo had a... not a good feeling. Not an abysmal one but just a weight on his shoulders like someone was watching him.

He nodded to himself. Three days, and the number three was important in stories. Three days was promising. But he could help but still be worried about approaching yet another area.

He shaded his eyes, looking over the town. It was bustling but in a quiet sort of way. Nothing that screamed powerful Fae here. The only thing that broke the suspension was the odd uniformity of the houses but that could just be how houses in town looked.

Nothing could beat Tommy and his little cottage. He tilted his head, scanning the town. It would be so helpful if he could just catch a glimpse of where he needed to go. He didn't think this fit the stories of the goblin market, or another court of the seasons.

If he had accidentally wandered out of the Veil and into a normal town, Tubbo was going to go absolutely feral.

Right. Well, nothing to it but going down. He'd never learn anything if he stayed up here. The path led right to it.

Probably not a great sign.

Tubbo half walked, half skidded down the hill, grateful he wasn't wearing his slippers for this trip. He didn't think he was ever going to get the mud and grit out of his clothes

The town didn't eat him as he drew closer, nor did Technoblade pop out of the bushes with his axe. The closer he got the more it was... just a town. He could see people drifting outside their houses, standing in the streets and in the stalls.

The closer he got, the more eerie it felt. Tubbo tried his best to shake it off. Maybe he could ask someone for directions? This close to the town, the path had started to branch. But surely, someone could point him the right way. He turned towards a villager approaching him, opening his mouth.

"Hello? Do you know where--"

And Tubbo had to bite back a horrified scream as the villager walked past.

This close, it was hard to miss their jerky gait, hands wrapped around a nonexistent weight in their arms. They didn't turn toward him when he spoke, walking past as if he wasn't even there.

But that wasn't what made him want to scream.

Their face was nothing he had heard of in his most horrifying tales. It looked like a child's attempt at molding a face out of putty, nose far too large for their face, eyes crooked, the skin far too stiff. Their resting face was completely emotionless, eyes blank and empty.

They stopped. Turned and took a few steps. Before turning and walking away and again as Tubbo watched in horror. Completely directionless, they wandered down the street.

And, a shudder creeping up his back, every villager he could see was the same. The same crude features, the same empty eyes as they wandered or stood at their stalls. The stall gates looked like they had never been open with the villager never even twitching to open them.

All of them looked the same. Even the children, and Tubbo had to fight the urge to bolt as a small child wandered the street with those same empty eyes.

And over it all, the awful feeling of being watched, but with no one around watching him.

"Know where what?"

"Gah!" Tubbo said, pressing his arms close and taking a half step away. Looking over his shoulder was, well, Tubbo would have called him odd but he was a sight for horrified eyes after seeing the villagers.

Sure, his eyes may be completely black, but at least they had some spark of interest and emotion in them! The rest of him seemed almost oddly ordinary, clad in a red sweater and dark parts.

Except for the chicken mask over the head, blocking everything but those pitch black eyes. At least, Tubbo thought it was a chicken mask. You never knew beyond the Veil.

"No, I don't think we have a gag anywhere here, you'll have to try someplace else." The stranger said, beginning to turn away.

“Wait.” Tubbo said, biting back the instinctive please. Manners were awful, and he wished he had never even heard of them. “Who are you?”

Were they someone who could help him?

“Me? Well, you can call me Poultry Man.” The stranger said and Tubbo couldn’t help the shocked look on his face. Well. It was very apt, he supposed, with the mask on their head. “And can I have your name?”

“You can call me Tubbo.” Tubbo said, and he was forced to step back as Poultry Man suddenly took off down the street. He hurried after them, not wanting his one shot of answers to get away. “Did I offend you somehow?”

“I do have things to do.” And it was odd to talk to someone whose face wasn’t changing. But at least it wasn’t the creepy villagers.

“Are they and you Fae?” Tubbo said, gesturing to Poultry Man. There was still the lingering anxiety of somehow leaving the Veil.

“No, they’re not Fae. They’re just villagers. You can trade for materials with them.” Poultry Man said, conspicuously not answering the question about himself. “If you have the emeralds for it. They like those.”

Materials. What kind of materials. And why?

“Where are we?” Tubbo said. Who would have villages like these? It didn’t fit any Court that he knew about, but then again, the world behind the Veil was incredibly hard to explore.

“Welcome to Hermitcraft.” Poultry Man said, gesturing wide as he walked. “Home of the Hermits.”

“The Hermits.” Tubbo whispered, mostly to himself as he stared around with fresh eyes.

“You know them?” Poultry Man (seriously, not his real name) asked, his head tilting to the side. Tubbo nodded slowly, not trusting his words. “Color me surprised then. I didn’t think anyone remembered anything.

Only a handful of stories focused on the Hermits, but enough people had pieced together that there was some sort of group of Fae who enjoyed making fantastical buildings and changing the landscape. They could build masterpieces and tear apart a forest in a day.

Not all of them were kind stories. They were powerful, but reclusive, rarely seen unless one stumbled upon their current building areas. Most stories came from people stumbling upon what they built long after they had left.

Beholden to no Court but their own group.

Perfect, Tubbo calculated. Possibly strong enough to take on the Winter Court. And maybe willing to let Tubbo strike a deal. Was it one of them who was watching him before? He couldn’t feel their gaze anymore.

The only downside was their infamously aloof and mercurial temperaments outside of their own groups. The title of hermits given not just for their own name, but also because they seemed to actively avoid anyone else. But it wasn't actively hostile like the stories of the Winter Court's hunts or the Autumn Court's deals, or the Summer Court's games or the Spring Court's gardens. Tubbo could work with that.

"Are you looking for one of them then?" Poultry man said. "You seem like you're a man on the move, looking for someone around here. Pretty odd. Pre-tt-y odd."

"Yes." Tubbo said, his mind churning through the stories and settling on one name. "I'm looking for Scar."

"Right then. You found him." Poultry Man, said something in his eyes that Tubbo couldn't label as he gestured forward.

And Tubbo gasped.

That had not been in front of them just now.

Ahead loomed the *largest* tree that he had ever seen. Even without other trees for contrast, it easily dwarfed the area, broad branches swaying the wind. The roots arched taller than Tubbo and he was pretty sure he wouldn't be able to wrap his arms around one.

"Yeah, Scar got a little overzealous with building his beginning base this time." Poultry man said. "We'll, I don't want to keep you. Good luck! You'll probably be needed it."

"Wait-" Tubbo said, turning back but Poultry Man was gone. Just swaying grass where he was once standing.

Chalk up another point for him being a Fae.

Tubbo stared at the ground considering it before shaking his head. He didn't have time for this. At least he didn't do anything dumb like thank the other.

He had bigger things to focus on right now. Tubbo walked over to the massive tree, head on a swivel as he waited for something to jump out at him. As he drew closer, he caught sight of a little door nestled into the side of the trunk.

Well. That was probably where he needed to. Tubbo hesitated only a moment before he pushed open the door and stepped inside. Hopefully, they wouldn't kill him just for coming in, right? If he had a gold coin for every time that happened...

"Welcome to Trader Scar's where you can find all of your trading needs!" Tubbo nearly jumped a foot in the air.

"Please don't steal my bones." He said immediately, then flushed bright red.

Scar. It had to be Scar behind the ornately carved wooden counter. Their long dark brown hair was most braided back, exposing pointed ears. His clothes were ornate, green robes with golden embroidery that glinted too brightly to be false.

If it wasn't for the massive scars stretching across his face and the golden leg braces peeking out from the robes, Tubbo would have thought him right out of a painting of a Fae.

"No, no!" Scar said, his voice jumping higher on the second word as he leaned against the counter. "I run a completely reputable above the board shop with only the finest wares on display."

Tubbo glanced around, eyes wide. He didn't see much. The shop itself was beautiful. He hadn't known you could do such detailing with wood, the walls themselves looking carved into the tree. Like someone had simply scraped out a hollow and put a shop into it because why not? Warm sunlight dappled the floor through carved windows, windows he hadn't seen outside.

Chests stood against the walls, and not the rough hewed and old ones he was used to. This were sanded and polished, cut perfectly so that the sides fit seamlessly, and boasting sturdy metal locks. Not iron. Copper maybe?

It's not like they were locked. Scar probably didn't have to worry about anyone stealing from him.

"Well, I'm not really looking for wares." Tubbo said, fidgeting with the sleeves of his sweater. He didn't think there was an item he could buy to solve his problem.

Maybe this was a bad idea. Maybe he should have just gone after Tommy again, rather than try this out, and Tubbo couldn't help the creeping doubt sinking in when he remembered how few people walked out of this shop with what they wanted when they walked in. Maybe Philza would have been better on the second try or the third.

He remembered Techno pursuing him down the mountain, the bone rattling threats, and winced.

The other part is tired and grouchy and just wants Tommy back with him, by his side again, and is just.

This is the longest Tubbo's had to be polite to people in years. He wants to bite someone.

"Well, what are you looking for? I can't offer it, if I don't know it." And Tubbo opens his mouth to say and then hesitated.

Scar knew. He could tell by the way they leaned against the desk, brilliant green eyes knowing and weighing like a merchant looking at a priceless artifact. He knew and he wanted Tubbo to say it.

Why? That's the part he couldn't work out. And it made him suspicious.

Scar was the easiest to contact, the easiest to make a deal with. But that didn't make him the safest, and Tubbo could feel the anxiety creeping up his spine.

"My friend was taken, and I want him back." He said, leaning against the chair and trying to channel the confidence that Tommy had always carried like a crown. "So, my friend. But

that's not a ware because you can't sell people."

A favor, he doesn't say. Because favors were always big deals in stories, and some stupid childish part of him is scared of the words.

"Eh, I'd argue with that!" Scar said, and there was an almost casual sort of horror that Tubbo was struck with at his blasé tone and calm wave of his hand when he so casually mentioned selling people. "But, right, your friend! I know him."

He didn't continue, smiling cheerily. Tubbo eyed him uncertainly, mulling it over.

The hard part of dealing with the Fae was teasing out from the rules what was actually necessary to make a trade versus what the Fae passed along in the stories and through influence of rules that would be convenient for them.

"How do you know him?" He asked, a bit suspicious.

"The Winter King adopting a Changeling is a bit of a big deal, even around here." Scar said, leaning over the counter. "I may be a Hermit but we still keep track of where the seasons go on rolling. Do a little market analysis."

"Right." Tubbo said, feeling just a little bit foolish as he fought the urge to fidget. He knew the Hermits were hard to find and he kind of thought- well. His mistake.

"What's the price then?" Tubbo settled on. "For this favor or trade."

"That's two different things." And Tubbo couldn't help the red hot flush that stole over his cheeks. Did he mess up bad? But Scar only smiled, wagging a finger. "A favor I give and then call on later, or as an open offer after you help me. A trade, we've both got to have it done at the time of sale! At least that's how it works in Scar's shop!"

"Of course." Tubbo said, and he felt the blush deepen as Scar winked. He needed to get it back together.

He forced himself to think about some of the scarier stories of Scar's shops. The people lured by a park that never came back and still stumbled around in wide eyed enjoyment, those used as fertilizer in some sort of grass war, anything to distract from Scar's smile.

It was so easy to forget, in this sunlit shop, that Scar wasn't the semi friendly merchants of the markets and traveling peddlers. That he was inhuman, and that this deal was going to probably result in Tubbo's death and that the friendliness was all an act.

Philza had been open and threatening and the Court so cold. Scar seemed the opposite. Maybe because he wanted to deal?

Organize. Calculate. Tubbo was good at haggling with merchants. He could piece together the details from the few success stories that he had and work out something clever.

"I'm on a bit of a timeframe so a trade might be difficult unless you're thinking of something specific." Tubbo said, nodding to himself. Two weeks was what Philza had left slip, and he

had already lost three days.

“Well, I suppose I can think of something.” Scar said, fingers tapping against the counter. He pushes back one lock of hair behind his pointed ear and Tubbo glanced away, hoping he didn’t catch them staring. “Mm, but birdie did bring you in. Maybe I should see if he wants something.”

“Birdie?” Tubbo echoed. That wasn’t a name he had heard before in connection to the Hermits. Or, well, nickname.

“I’ll be right back! Don’t you disappear.” Scar said, hopping back up straight, his braces clicking. He turned away, disappearing into a door that was...

That was definitely not there before but yep, that was a door tucked into the tree bark wall.

“Oh, you’ve got to be kidding me.” Tubbo said, letting his shoulders slump. He lets himself have only a moment before stiffening again. He didn’t feel watched, but better not to lower his guard here.

He sighed. There wasn’t a ‘Birdie’ in any of the Hermit or possible Hermit stories he knew. But that didn’t mean much, information about them was scarce enough. Scar was one of the better known ones, with his deals, and even then he had barely a handful compared to the Winter Court.

His calculating mind ticked through the possibilities. Either Birdie was someone in the town, or they were the one watching him.

Neither of those were good options. He couldn’t shake the oddness of the town now which was off because he was literally standing *in a giant tree*.

Tubbo snorted. Tommy was going to lose his mind when he told him what happened.

There was a quiet click. It’s showtime again. Tubbo tried his best to bury his concern and fear in his chest, taking a deep breath.

Whatever price Scar was offering, he’d haggle it down as best as he could. It’s all for seeing Tommy, his Tommy, again.

“Alrighty then, got that worked out.” Scar said. There was a golden hairpiece holding his hair back now, a violet gemstone glimmering in the light. “So, I was thinking I could maybe do you a favor.”

“In exchange for what?” Tubbo said, biting back the instinctive no. He would have preferred a trade over a wager, but what did he have to trade other than himself?

“Oh, nothing much! Just three tasks some of the hermits need doing. Glorified chores really, easily handleable for someone like yourself. No worries about it, once they tell me you did their chores for them, I’ll be giving you that favor you need and you’ll have your friend back.” Scar said. Tubbo turned the thoughts over in his mind.

He couldn't help but notice that Scar talked about other hermits completely differently than his speech to Tubbo or his calm tone about the idea of treating people like wares. There was an intense fondness there, almost unnatural until Tubbo realized that this was the actual Scar, leaking through the merchant charm.

That was good. It meant Scar's promise was good, that he valued the needs of the other Hermits enough to value work done for them in regards for a favor.

"I'll get Tommy back as a regular human?" He checked. He didn't want Scar pulling a double cross on that bit if he didn't and if Scar was telling the truth...

Which he had to be because Fae couldn't lie, it meant the hermits really could oppose the Courts of the Seasons. Which would be perfect right now.

"Why, of course! The return policy at Trader Scar's is amazing, really we go above and beyond." Scar said. His fingers tapped the counter again.

Right. That still left some things to consider.

"Are these three tasks dangerous?" Tubbo asked. "How will I know who needs a task done?"

"I'll be giving you a list! You'll just pop by the first one, anyone around can give you directions." Scar said. He smiled wider, strangely conspiratorial. "But between you and me, I don't have the first clue what they need you to do. We take privacy very seriously here and that's what our customers requested!"

That was, Tubbo had to bite back a groan. A little voice in his head that sounded suspiciously like Tommy was shrieking swears. So, these chores might be dangerous and might be in the Veil was more like would be.

He stared down at the knots in the wood grain of the counter, considering.

This could be a trick, the Winter Court pulling ties with the Hermits to have him killed, but Tubbo had never heard of the Hermits having ties to any Court. They were pretty infamous for it actually!

Or it could just be the easy cruelty of the Fae and Tubbo couldn't shake how casual Scar's attitude was to anyone outside of the Hermits. These could be incredibly dangerous.

But without a deal with Philza.

Without knowing if he could find more Fae in time, Fae strong enough to take on the Winter Court.

He'd be gambling Tommy.

"What would happen if I fail?" He asked softly, looking back up at Scar.

"Depends on the When." Scar said, and Tubbo bristled at the lack of answer. "If you get some work done, that might influence the price I demand from you. But the favor you're asking for

is preeetty big and that's going to influence the price if you fail."

"What's the most likely one?" Tubbo said, and immediately regretted his curiosity.

"You stay here forever." Scar said, and he nodded his head to outside. Tubbo glanced out the window and blanched as he remembered the villagers, nothing more than zombies waiting for a task to be given to them. Not a fragment of personality, of joy, just waiting for a job.

It would be absolutely a nightmare for him. Tubbo had never had the roaming instinct that Tommy had, had been the one to pull Tommy back on several occasions. But the thought of being one of those empty dolls? Never leaving, never hearing more stories, never seeing Tommy again (gods, he hoped Tommy would never see him that way).

(Gods, please let Tommy never meet him again if that happens).

An absolute nightmare.

"Can I have your name?" Scar said, and Tubbo bit his bottom lip until it bled at the bone rattling tug his chest gave. There wasn't suddenly a yawning desire to give it over, to purchase something else, a weight and want so deep that Tubbo felt like he was going to scream. And judging by the whistle, Scar noticed.

"You can call me Tubbo." He said slowly. It took a few more deep breaths before Scar settled back and the yawning urge to buy buy buy left his system. Wow. That sucked.

"Well, Tubbo I am a business man and I don't have all day! Got many big things to do, maybe big things to built. So, will you be hopping aboard the Scar express and taking this deal?" Scar said and Tubbo could not be imagining how those green eyes seem to glow pale blue in the light.

It was stupid. He had no guarantee of safety, or that this wouldn't be a trap. Chores for a Fae could be deadly and failure meant staying here forever as a villager. But on the other hand. It was Tommy. And Tubbo couldn't forget how he looked lying on the ice, or fleeing through the snow. Completely different to his friend of just weeks ago, from the Tommy he had grown up with so close that Tubbo could swear sometimes that they were born together. Secret siblings like they whispered sometimes under the covers at the orphanage, stupid with their looks and ages different. But. It was for *Tommy*.

"Where do I start?" Tubbo said.

End Notes

Tubbo: Hey, what if I didn't die to the Veil and instead hunted down the other group who could and would actually challenge the Winter Court

Philza and the Winter Court: You Can't

Tubbo: Haha What If

The rule of three is a fascinating part of fairy tales and I really wanted to incorporate it here! Three days, three tasks, three dresses (Donkeyskin was an interesting one), three sons, and so on. Tubbo's gonna take it as a hopeful sign.

If you guys liked this, kudos, bookmarks, and reviews are all appreciated! I love reading what you guys have to say :)

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